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PERISCOPE

Casey at the Bat—For Himself

White House aides suspect that CIA Director William J. Casey, under fire for the mining of Nicaraguan harbors and other covert CIA activities in the Central American country, shrewdly engineered a ringing endorsement from President Reagan by leaking stories to two conservative newspapers. The stories questioned whether the CIA director would keep his job; after they appeared, Casey wrote to Reagan complaining that he found it "very difficult to operate" under such conditions. The president predictably responded by declaring his unwavering support for Casey. One reason the White House aides believe that Casey was behind the stories is that they appeared only in The Washington Times and the New York Post, the CIA director's favorite conservative papers. In addition, Casey knew that because Ronald Reagan hates confrontation, the ploy would almost certainly result in a vote of confidence.